

PD-0703-20

IN THE  
COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS

FILED  
COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS  
12/14/2020  
DEANA WILLIAMSON, CLERK

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The State of Texas,

Petitioner,

v.

Jessie Lee Brooks, Jr,

Respondent

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**PETITION FOR DISCRETIONARY REVIEW**

**STATE'S BRIEF**

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Appeal from the Third Court of Appeals, Cause No. 03-18-00759-CR, and the 20<sup>th</sup>  
Judicial District Court, Milam County, Texas Trial Court Cause No. CR 25,688,  
Honorable John Youngblood

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## STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Defendant was indicted for Assault Impeding Breath of a Family Member and Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon. The State proceeded with the two cases under separate cause numbers. C.R. Vol. 1 P. 5. A jury acquitted defendant of Assault Impeding Breath of a Family Member, but found defendant guilty of Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon. R.R. Vol. 5 P. 139. Defendant was sentenced to thirty years confinement in TDCJ Institutional Division by the Trial Court. C.R. Vol. 1 P. 118. Defendant appealed the conviction to the Third Court of Appeals.

The Third Court of Appeals considered the appeal and ruled that a non-verbal threat would constitute a “distinguishable discrete act” that would separately violate the assault statute and therefore, even though not an element of the offense, the hypothetically correct jury charge requires proof of a verbal threat. Slip Op. at 11. The Court of Appeals then determined that there was legally insufficient evidence to uphold the conviction because there was insufficient evidence to show the threat was verbal. Slip Op. at 11. The Third Court of Appeals further found that the judgment could not be reformed to a lesser included charge, again based on no verbal threat being proven. Slip Op. at 17. Due to these findings the Third Court of Appeals declined to address the constitutionality of the court costs. Slip Op. at 17.

It is from this ruling that petitioner seeks review from this Court.

## **STATEMENT OF PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

The Third Court of Appeals filed an order reversing the trial court and rendering acquittal on July 3, 2020. No motion for rehearing was filed. Petition for Discretionary Review was granted on November 11, 2020

## **STATEMENT REGARDING ORAL ARGUMENT**

There will be no oral argument in this case as per the Order granting discretionary review.

## ISSUE PRESENTED

- I. When the State includes a deadly-weapon allegation in its aggravated assault by threat indictment and then fails to prove its manner and means of the threat, can the State still prove assault by threat based on use or exhibition of the deadly weapon?



## **ARGUMENT AND AUTHORITIES**

### **I. Background**

The victim in this case lived with the Defendant in a house in Cameron. R.R. Vol. 4 P. 57. On the date of the incident, the Defendant locked the victim out of that house. R.R. Vol. 4 P. 57. After defendant initially locked the victim out of the house, the Defendant confronted victim when she attempted to enter the house. R.R. Vol. 4 P. 57. During this confrontation, Defendant first grabbed the victim's neck and then started hitting the victim with a board. R.R. Vol. 4 P. 57. The victim told the defendant he was hurting her, to which defendant responded that the victim "needed to hit" and continued to hit her across her fingers with a board until they started to bleed. R.R. Vol. 4 P. 57. The victim then went to the emergency room in Rockdale, Texas to treat her injuries. R.R. Vol. 4 P. 58. The victim stated she drove to the Rockdale Hospital to be safe from him after the incident. R.R. Vol. 4 P. 166. The treating physician noted that the victim had injuries consistent with her description of the incident. R.R. Vol. 4 P. 131-32. The following day the victim filed a written statement with the Milam County Sheriff's Office. R.R. Vol. 4 P. 57.



**II. When the State has included a deadly-weapon allegation in its aggravated assault by threat indictment, the State can prove assault by threat based on the use or exhibition of the deadly weapon.**

Under precedent set forth by this Court, there is an immaterial variance where the State has included a deadly-weapon allegation in an aggravated assault by threat indictment, and then failed to prove the manner and means of the threat. Because the variance is immaterial, the State can still prove the aggravated assault by threat based on the use or exhibition of the deadly weapon.

**A. Standard of Review**

This Court has held that determining whether evidence is sufficient to support each element of a criminal offense is governed by the standard provided in *Jackson v. Virginia*. *Brooks v. State*, 323 S.W.3d 893, 912 (Tex. Crim. App. 2010). This standard requires that the Court determine, after viewing this evidence in the light most favorable to the prosecution, if *any* rational trier of fact could have found the essential elements of the crime beyond a reasonable doubt. *Jackson v. Virginia*, 443 U.S. 307, 319 (1979)(emphasis in original).

**B. Elements of Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon by Threat.**

In order to prove a charge of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon by threat, the State must provide sufficient evidence that the Defendant intentionally or

knowingly threatened another with imminent bodily injury using or exhibiting a weapon during the commission of the assault. Tex. Penal Code § 22.02 (a)(2). The threat can be either verbal or non-verbal. *McGowan v. State*, 664 S.W.2d 355, 357 (Tex. Crim. App. 1984; *Donobo v. State*, 39 S.W.3d 324, 329 (Tex. App. – Fort Worth 2001, pet ref'd). Indeed, the mere display of a deadly weapon itself constitutes a threat of the required imminent harm. *Robinson v. State*, 596 S.W.2d 130, 133 n.7 (Tex. Crim. App. 1980).

In *Gollihar v. State*, the Court clarified that the State only needs to prove the elements and does not need to prove an unnecessary allegation. *Gollihar v. State*, 46 S.W.3d 243, 256-57 (Tex. Crim. App. 2001). This rule overturned prior precedent from *Burrell v. State* that had required the State to prove any descriptive matter included in the charging instrument, even when needlessly stated. *Burrell v. State*, 526 S.W.2d 799, 802 (Tex. Crim. App. 1975) overturned in *Gollihar v. State*, 46 S.W.3d 243 (Tex. Crim. App. 2001). This cleared up inconsistencies between differing lines of cases so that the rule would be consistent with current law and in line with *Jackson* and federal constitutional requirements. *Gollihar*, 46 S.W.3d at 256-57.

**C. The Variance Between the Indictment and the Proof at Trial  
Was Not Material Because the Deadly Weapon Allegation  
Notified Defendant of Non-Verbal Threat.**

The rule in *Gollihar* was further clarified, breaking down variances between the indictment and proof shown at trial into three categories. *Johnson v. State*, 364 S.W.3d

292, 298-99 (Tex. Crim. App. 2012). These categories are (1) a variance involving statutory language that defines the offense, (2) a variance involving a non-statutory allegation that describes an allowable unit of prosecution element of the offense, or (3) other immaterial non-statutory allegations. *Id.* Variances of the first type are always material and will render the evidence legally insufficient, variances of the third type are never sufficiently material that they will render evidence legally insufficient, but variances of the second type are not always material and may render evidence insufficient only if the variance is material. *Id.*

The Court of Appeals in this case determined the variance here was a non-statutory description of an allowable unit of prosecution element of the offense, placing it in the second category of variances. Slip Op. P. 11. Under the categorization provided by *Johnson* the evidence still must not be rendered legally insufficient unless the variance is material. Here, the Court of Appeals erred in concluding, without analysis, that a variance was material simply because they determined it fit in the second category provided by the Court in *Johnson*. Slip Op. P. 12.

A material variance occurs when the variance prejudices a defendant's substantial rights. *Ramjattansingh v. State*, 548 S.W.3d 540, 547 (Tex. Crim. App. 2018). This occurs when the indictment, as written, (1) fails to adequately inform the defendant of the charge against him, or (2) subjects the defendant to the risk of being prosecuted later for the same crime. *Id.* The Court has explained that the bottom line in a sufficiency review is that variances are tolerated as long as they are not so great



that the proof at trial “shows an entirely different offense” than what was alleged in the charging instrument. *Id.* (Quoting *Johnson*, 364 S.W.3d at 295).

The Court of Appeals misapplied precedent in determining the unit of prosecution variance was between a verbal and non-verbal threat, ruling that such a variance showed an entirely different offense. Slip Op. P 11. Absent an explicit statement that ‘the allowable unit of prosecution shall be such and such,’ the best indicator of legislative intent regarding the unit of prosecution is the gravamen or focus of the offense. *Jones v. State*, 323 S.W.3d 885, 889 (Tex. Crim. App. 2008). Essentially, the unit of prosecution tends to be defined by the offense element that requires a completed act. *Id.* at 890. The assault statute establishes separate and distinct assaultive crimes, with the gravamen of the offense of aggravated assault being determined by the specific type of assault that underlies the aggravating factors, either by bodily injury or by threat. *Landrian v. State*, 268 S.W.3d 532, 536-37 (Tex. Crim. App. 2008). Here, there is no dispute that the indictment clearly lays out assault by threat, which has been contrasted as being conduct-oriented against assaults causing bodily injury, which are described as result-oriented. *Id.* at 536.

The conduct focused upon by the indictment is the act of making a threat, regardless of any result that may be caused. *Id.* at 536. But threats need not be verbal; a person can communicate a threat by action as well as conduct. *McGowan v. State*, 664 S.W.2d 355, 357 (Tex. Crim. App. 1984); *Donoho v. State*, 39 S.W.3d 324, 329 (Tex. App. – Fort Worth 2001, pet ref’d). Indeed, the display of a deadly weapon itself

constitutes a threat of the required imminent harm. *Robinson v. State*, 596 S.W.2d 130, 133 n.7 (Tex. Crim. App. 1980). Under 22.02(a)(2), assault by threat is aggravated whenever a defendant “uses or exhibits a deadly weapon during the commission of the assault.” Penal Code §22.02(a)(2). While words at times may be pointed, they are incapable of being deadly weapons. Therefore, a non-verbal threat is always included in the unit of prosecution for an aggravated assault by threat charge as the display of the deadly weapon itself constitutes a non-verbal threat.

In this case, the aggravating condition was the use of a 2X4 as part of the threat. Thus, the Trial Court was correct in finding that the phrase “by telling her that he was going to end her life” was superfluous, as the elements required the State to prove the threat of exhibiting or using the 2X4. *See* R.R. Vol. 5 p. 56. The proof shown at trial showed evidence of a non-verbal threat with the 2X4 similar to the threat that was upheld in *McGowan v. State*. In *McGowan*, the facts showed that the victim in one count of aggravated assault by threat was unaware of what struck her the single time she was struck and showed she was not threatened in any way by the appellant’s knife. *McGowan v. State*, 664 S.W.2d at 357-58. However, in the other count evidence showed that the other victim was initially stabbed, saw the appellant holding the knife, and began begging appellant not to cut her, which the Court found sufficient to uphold a conviction of aggravated assault by threat. *Id.* This case provided that the Defendant repeatedly struck the victim with a 2X4 board, even as the victim told the Defendant that the 2X4 was hurting her. R.R. Vol. 4 P. 57. In her



written statement, the victim in this case explained “I told Jessie that he was hurting me so he told me I need to hit. So he kept hitting me with the board...” R.R. Vol. 7 Pp. 4-5. Like the upheld conviction in *McGowan*, this shows the victim perceived what she was struck with and acknowledged the continuing threat of the 2X4. Therefore, despite failing to show the statement alleged in the indictment, the evidence shown at trial did not provide proof of an entirely different offense than the one charged, but instead showed an aggravated assault by threat with a deadly weapon, a piece of wood, just as alleged in the indictment.

The Defendant will likely claim that the State is arguing the mere identification of an assault by threat in the indictment is an unnecessary allegation. *See* Respondent’s Brief on the Merits, P. 5. However, the issue presented does not diminish the requirement that a threat be included in the proof, only that the State need not prove superfluous language regarding the manner and means of the threat. So long as the evidence does not show an entirely different act, then any variance in the manner and means proved at trial should not render evidence insufficient.

**D. The Defendant’s Substantial Rights Were Not Prejudiced As  
The Defendant Did Not Lack Notice of the Charge Proved at  
Trial.**

The Court of Appeals observed that even when a variance is material, reversal of a conviction still relies on whether the variance prejudices the defendant’s substantial rights. Slip Op. P. 9; *Santana v. State*, 59 S.W.3d 187, 195 (Tex. Crim. App.



2001)(quoting *Gollibar*, 46 S.W.3d at 257). Whether a Defendant's substantial rights are prejudiced turns on whether the indictment, as written, informed the Defendant of the charge against him sufficiently to allow him to prepare an adequate defense at trial, and whether prosecution under a deficiently drafted indictment would subject the defendant to the risk of being prosecuted later for the same crime. *Gollibar*, 46 S.W.3d at 257. The Defendant will likely argue that the indictment as drafted only provided notice of a verbal threat and each individual threat is a distinguishable discreet act allowing the State to charge Defendant again for this same act. *See* Respondent's Brief on the Merits, P. 9-10. However, as discussed above, there was sufficient notice that the threat included the exhibition or use of the deadly weapon, the 2X4. And as previously established, the display of a deadly weapon itself constitutes a threat of the required imminent harm. *Robinson v. State*, 596 S.W.2d 130, 133 n.7 (Tex. Crim. App. 1980). Likewise, as discussed in the unit of prosecution section above, Defendant would rightly be protected from future prosecution by the State if it were to allege in a new indictment Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon by Threat for the non-verbal threat using or exhibiting the 2X4 due to the indictment in this current case.

The Defendant received sufficient notice of the charge against him allowing the Defendant the ability to prepare an adequate trial defense. The charge provided that the Defendant threatened the victim "by telling her that he was going to end her life and did use or exhibit a deadly weapon during the commission of the assault, to wit: a piece of wood." Slip Op. P. 10. The State filed a Notice of Intention to Amend the

Indictment about two and a half months before trial. Slip Op. P. 5. This amendment sought to delete the phrase “by telling her that he was going to end her life” arguing the language was superfluous. Slip Op. P. 5. While the Trial Court agreed this phrase was superfluous, because the indictment had already been read to the jury, the Trial Court chose to proceed on the original indictment, noting, however, “the State’s burden is to prove the elements of the offense as charged and that’s my ruling.” Slip Op. P. 5. This notice to amend made it clear that the State did not necessarily intend to prove a verbal threat, providing the Defendant two and a half months to prepare a defense based on any threat; verbal, non-verbal, or a combination of both.

Indeed, the Defendant’s trial strategy appeared to be dependent on arguing a lack of any threat. At the close of evidence, the Defendant moved for directed verdict on the basis that no threat was proven. R.R. Vol. 5 Pp. 76-77. Likewise, when making jury arguments Defendant proposed that the State proved no threat of any kind, not that there may be evidence of a non-verbal threat, but no verbal threat was made. R.R. Pp. 104-105. The Defendant made no objection to the Trial Court of any lack of language to differentiate between a verbal and non-verbal threat in the jury charge. *See* R.R. Vol. 5 P.p. 54-55. The Defendant did object to the omission of the specific phrase “by telling her he was going to end her life,” but the Trial Court overruled the objection stating “I find that language to be superfluous. The State is required to prove up the elements of the offense charged.” R.R. Vol. 5 P. 56. This mirrors the statement made at the beginning of trial as the Trial Court heard arguments on the



motion to amend the indictment. R.R. Vol. 4 P. 16 (“Well, I – frankly, I don’t understand why it’s in there but I think it’s superfluous. I think the State’s burden is to prove the elements of the offense as charged and that’s my ruling”). Even after the verdict, Defendant continued to make no distinction between verbal and non-verbal threats in either of the Defendant’s motions for new trial, continuing to argue only that there was no evidence of any threat. C.R. Vol. 1 Pp. 126-28, 137-40. The Defendant continued to argue throughout the proceedings that the State failed to provide evidence of *any* threat, not just a verbal threat. This shows the trial strategy, and the dispute was not a result of a surprise in the proof at trial, just a dispute about whether the victim’s account of events was credible; that dispute was ultimately decided by the Jury when it found the Defendant guilty of Aggravated Assault by Threat.

### **III. Conclusion**

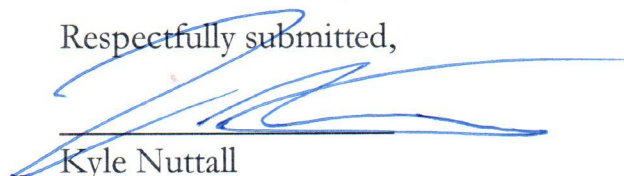
Under the standards explained in *Gollibar* and *Johnson*, a failure to prove up an unnecessary statement on manner and means set forth in the indictment, where the variance was not material and did not substantially prejudice the Defendant, does not render evidence insufficient to convict. Here, the variance was not material as the indictment includes the use or exhibition of the deadly weapon, an act creating a threat of the required imminent harm. Nor did it substantially prejudice the Defendant as the whole trial strategy was based on a lack of any threat having been

committed. Therefore, the Court should uphold the conviction of the Jury in this case and remand for further proceedings in accordance with this Court's ruling.

### **PRAYER**

WHEREFORE, PREMISES CONSIDERED, State prays that the Court REVERSE the Court of Appeals Decision, AFFIRM the conviction from the trial court, and REMAND with instructions for further proceedings in line with this Court's decision.

Respectfully submitted,



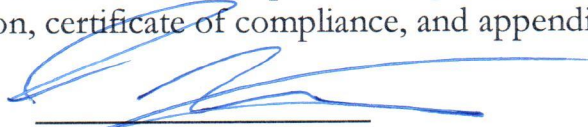
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### **CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE**

I hereby certify that, pursuant to Rule 9.4(i) of the Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure, Appellee's Brief contains 2,751 words, exclusive of the caption, identification of parties, statement regarding oral argument, table of content, index of

authorities, statement of the case, statement of issues presented, procedural history, signature, proof of service, certification, certificate of compliance, and appendix.



Kyle Nuttall

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I certify that on December 10, 2020, a true and correct copy of Appellee's Brief is being or will be forwarded to Appellant's counsel by courtesy efile service to sharon@diazwright.com.



Kyle Nuttall

# APPENDIX



**TEXAS COURT OF APPEALS, THIRD DISTRICT, AT AUSTIN**

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**NO. 03-18-00759-CR**

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**Jessie Lee Brooks, Jr., Appellant**

**v.**

**The State of Texas, Appellee**

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**FROM THE 20TH DISTRICT COURT OF MILAM COUNTY  
NO. CR25,688, THE HONORABLE JOHN YOUNGBLOOD, JUDGE PRESIDING**

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**OPINION**

Jessie Lee Brooks Jr. was convicted by a jury of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. *See* Tex. Penal Code § 22.02(a)(2). The indictment alleged that Brooks threatened Lisa Grayson, his girlfriend, with imminent bodily injury “by telling her that he was going to end her life” while using or exhibiting a deadly weapon, to wit: a piece of wood. *See id.* §§ 22.01(a)(2), 22.02(a)(2). Arising out of the same set of facts, the State also indicted Brooks for family violence assault by impeding Grayson’s breath or circulation, *see id.* § 22.01(a)(2), and the jury found him not guilty of that offense. The trial court entered judgment on the jury’s verdict, assessing punishment at 30 years’ confinement and requiring Brooks to pay several court costs and fees.

In four issues, Brooks contends that (1) the evidence was insufficient to support the jury’s finding that he threatened Grayson, (2) the costs or fees are facially unconstitutional as violations of the separation of powers, (3) we should modify the trial court’s Order to Withdraw

Funds from his Inmate Trust Account, and (4) we should modify the judgment to correct two clerical errors.

We reverse Brooks's conviction for aggravated assault and render a judgment of acquittal because there was a material variance between the indictment, which alleged that Brooks threatened Grayson "by telling her that he was going to end her life," and the evidence at trial, which showed a non-verbal threat of displaying a piece of wood, that resulted in insufficient evidence to support his conviction, and because the variance prejudiced his substantial rights.

### **BACKGROUND**

Grayson lived with Brooks, her boyfriend, in Cameron, Texas. According to Grayson, as she was leaving for work one morning, Brooks attacked her. She believed that it started with Brooks feeling jealous over her receiving money from her child's father, so he "jumped on" her, as he had done several times before, and beat her. She testified that when she went to her car that morning, he beat her with "a two-by-four" wooden board that he retrieved from the house. As he "beat [her] with a board," she tried to protect herself with her arms, and he kept hitting her. She testified: he "hit[] me to the point it knocked my tooth—yes—I mean, my tooth came out, the partial on my tooth." And further: "When I fell and like hit—like grabbed both of his hands and he like literally choked me real hard." During her testimony, she said that she "didn't even talk to Brooks that morning" of the assault.

She also described prior assaults where Brooks "jumped" on her and beat her, including a prior assault over her children where he "grabbed me by my neck and slammed me to

the—to the passenger door. And then he like jumped me, and then—and then he like threatened me and just like—and he like jumped on me and cussing me and cussing me.”

Grayson also testified that, after the assault that was the subject of this prosecution, she had bruises all over her body and her fingers “were busted.” She sought treatment for her injuries at a Rockdale emergency room 15–20 minutes away, in order to hide from Brooks. She told the ER physician “that she was hit by her boyfriend with a two-by-four about the right arm, right forearm, [and] right hand.” She also told the physician that she “had been choked the day before for about a minute,” “had some chest-wall pain from some trauma,” and “was hit the day before.”

That night, Brooks reported to the Cameron police that Grayson had returned to his house, broke the house’s windows, and went back to Rockdale. Officer James Sherer, of the Cameron Police Department, and a fellow officer offered to issue Grayson a trespass warning not to return to the house. Brooks agreed, so the officers contacted law enforcement in Rockdale to find her.

Law enforcement found Grayson in Rockdale during a traffic stop. She told Officer Sherer, who arrived later, that Brooks “struck [her] with a wooden board” and that she had not broken the windows out of the house. In addition, she told other officers at the traffic stop about being hit with the board. Several officers noticed bruising on her arm and hand, which she attributed to Brooks’s attack with the board.

Grayson also told Officer Sherer that during her several-month relationship with Brooks she went to a hospital once in Temple, where, “they had to, like, bring me back to life” because Brooks had “choked the s— out of” her. She expressed that Brooks had a history of telling her that he would stop hitting her, and she believed him, but the abuse continued.



After the traffic stop ended, Grayson went to a Cameron police station and provided a voluntary handwritten statement, which was admitted into evidence at trial. She described the attack:

The night went to car to get a Advil so Jessie lock me out the house I was tryin to come get back in house. he grad my neck start choching me so hard I couldn't Breath the he grad A Board start hitting me with it so hard I told Jessie that he was hurting me so he told me I need to Hit. So he kept Hittin me with the Board the After tha he start hittin my fingurs till they Stard Bleeding

Officer Clayton Domel of the Cameron Police Department reviewed the statement and later interviewed Grayson. She told him that there was an argument with Brooks during which Brooks "began to choke her." She said that she did not lose consciousness but "that she couldn't breathe and told him to stop." According to Officer Domel's description of Grayson's account, "at that point, [Brooks] quit choking her[,] and that's when he grabbed a piece of board, the two-by-four[,] from what she described[,] and began to strike her with it."

The State charged Brooks with two counts of assault in two separate indictments filed in two separate cause numbers. One charged him with intentionally or knowingly causing bodily injury to Grayson "by impeding the normal breathing or circulation of the blood . . . by applying pressure with hands to [her] throat and neck." The other charged him with intentionally or knowingly threatening her with imminent bodily injury "by telling her that he was going to end her life, and [he] did use or exhibit a deadly weapon during the commission of the assault, to wit: a piece of wood."

The cases proceeded to trial. A jury was empaneled; the State read both indictments to the jury verbatim; and Brooks pleaded not guilty to both offenses. The following day, before opening statements, the court addressed an issue "with regard to an amendment of

the indictment.” The record reflects that about two and a half months before trial, the State filed a Notice of Intention to Amend the Indictment, in which it sought to amend the assault-by-threat indictment by, among other things, deleting the phrase “by telling her that he was going to end her life.” The parties disputed whether the indictment had been amended by the notice, which had not been acted upon by the court. Ultimately, the trial court explained that trial would proceed on the original indictment as presented to the jury, implicitly denying the State’s request to amend the indictment. While the judge seemed to agree with the State’s argument that the phrase that it sought to delete was superfluous—remarking, “Well, I—frankly, I don’t understand why it’s in there but I think it’s superfluous”—he stated that “the State’s burden is to prove the elements of the offense as charged and that’s my ruling.”

The jury charge for aggravated assault by threat contained no instructions relating to the verbal threat contained in the indictment. In the abstract portion of the charge, the court defined “intentionally threaten another with imminent bodily injury” and “knowingly threaten another with imminent bodily injury” without reference to whether the threatening conduct was verbal or non-verbal. And, over Brooks’s objection, the application paragraphs omitted the phrase “by telling her that he was going to end her life.”<sup>1</sup> The court simply instructed the jury to find Brooks guilty if the State had proved beyond a reasonable doubt the three elements that

1. the defendant . . . threatened imminent bodily injury to [Grayson];
2. the defendant did this –
  - a. intentionally; or
  - b. knowingly; and

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<sup>1</sup> In response to Brooks’s objection that the phrase was “descriptive of the threat” and should be in the jury charge because it had been read to the jury, the trial court said, “And as I was saying, I find that language to be superfluous. The State is required to prove up the elements of the offense charged, and so I will overrule the objection at this time.”



3. the defendant, during the alleged assault, used or exhibited a deadly weapon, to wit: a piece of wood.

The jury acquitted Brooks of family violence assault by strangulation but found him guilty of aggravated assault by threat. This appeal followed.

## DISCUSSION

### **I. Material Variance Between Indictment's Allegation of Verbal Threat and Lack of Proof at Trial of Any Verbal Threat**

In his first issue, Brooks contends that the evidence was insufficient because the State failed to prove the “threatens” element of assault as it was charged in the indictment. *See* Tex. Penal Code §§ 22.01(a)(2), 22.02(a).

#### ***A. Applicable law and standard of review***

A person commits aggravated assault if the person “commits assault as defined in Sec. 22.01 and the person: . . . uses or exhibits a deadly weapon during the commission of the assault.” *Id.* § 22.02(a)(2). A person commits assault if the person “intentionally or knowingly threatens another with imminent bodily injury.” *Id.* § 22.01(a)(2). “Assault by threat requires only fear of imminent bodily injury and does not require a finding of actual bodily injury.” *Dolkart v. State*, 197 S.W.3d 887, 893 (Tex. App.—Dallas 2006, pet. ref’d). The offense “is conduct-oriented, focusing upon the act of making a threat, regardless of any result that threat might cause.” *Landrian v. State*, 268 S.W.3d 532, 536 (Tex. Crim. App. 2008). It is thus a “nature of conduct” offense, not a “result of conduct” offense. *See id.*; *see also id.* at 543 (Price, J., concurring) (“[T]here are the ‘bodily injury’ and ‘physical contact’ theories of simple assault, which are result-of-conduct theories of the offense, and then there is the ‘threat-of-imminent-bodily injury’ theory, which is a nature-of-conduct theory of the offense.”).



A threat need not be verbal; a person may communicate a threat by action or conduct. *McGowan v. State*, 664 S.W.2d 355, 347 (Tex. Crim. App. 1984); *Donoho v. State*, 39 S.W.3d 324, 329 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2001, pet. ref’d). The “display of a deadly weapon of and within itself constitutes a threat of the required imminent harm.” *Robinson v. State*, 596 S.W.2d 130, 133 n.7 (Tex. Crim. App. 1980); *Mitchell v. State*, 546 S.W.3d 780, 787 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] 2018, no pet.).

When reviewing the sufficiency of the evidence, “evidence is considered sufficient to support a conviction when, after considering all of the evidence in the light most favorable to the prosecution, a reviewing court concludes that any rational trier of fact could have found the essential elements of the offense beyond a reasonable doubt.” *Hernandez v. State*, 556 S.W.3d 308, 315 (Tex. Crim. App. 2017).<sup>2</sup> The “essential elements of the offense” are “the elements of the offense as defined by the hypothetically correct jury charge *for the case*.” *Id.* at 315 (quoting *Johnson v. State*, 364 S.W.3d 292, 294 (Tex. Crim. App. 2012)). “[A] hypothetically correct jury charge reflects the governing law, the indictment, the State’s burden of proof and theories of liability, and an adequate description of the offense for the particular case.” *Id.* It includes the statutory elements of the offense as modified by the indictment. *See id.* at 312–13; *Johnson*, 364 S.W.3d at 294.

There are sometimes “variances between allegations in the indictment and the State’s proof at trial.” *Hernandez*, 556 S.W.3d at 312. “[O]nly material variances will affect the hypothetically correct jury charge.” *Id.* “[A]llegations that give rise to immaterial variances”

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<sup>2</sup> All citations to *Hernandez* are to the Court’s opinion on original submission, which the Court affirmed on rehearing. *See Hernandez v. State*, 556 S.W.3d 308, 331 (Tex. Crim. App. 2018) (op. on reh’g) (“We affirm our original opinion reversing the judgment of the court of appeals, and we reject Hernandez’s arguments on rehearing for the reasons stated herein.”).

need not be “incorporate[d]” into the hypothetically correct jury charge for the case. *Johnson*, 364 S.W.3d at 294.

Two types of variances can be material. See *Hernandez*, 556 S.W.3d at 313–14; *Johnson*, 364 S.W.3d at 294–95. “The first type of variance occurs when the State’s proof deviates from the *statutory* theory of the offense as alleged in the indictment; the State may not plead one specific statutory theory but then prove another.” *Hernandez*, 556 S.W.3d at 313 (citing *Johnson*, 364 S.W.3d at 294). This type of variance is always material. *Id.* The second type of variance is a “non-statutory allegation that is descriptive of the offense in some way.” *Id.* at 313–14 (citing *Johnson*, 364 S.W.3d at 294). Whether this type is material “depend[s] upon whether it would result in conviction for a different offense than what the State alleged.” *Id.* at 314. If the variance “converts the offense proven at trial into a different offense than what was pled in the charging instrument,” then it is material. *Id.* at 316.

The key to identifying different offenses is pinpointing the “allowable unit of prosecution” for each offense. See *id.*; *Johnson*, 364 S.W.3d at 295–96. A statute’s allowable unit of prosecution is the “distinguishable discrete act that is a separate violation of the statute.” *Harris v. State*, 359 S.W.3d 625, 629 (Tex. Crim. App. 2011) (quoting *Ex parte Cavazos*, 203 S.W.3d 333, 336 (Tex. Crim. App. 2006)). “Absent an explicit statement that ‘the allowable unit of prosecution shall be such-and-such,’ the best indicator of legislative intent regarding the unit of prosecution is the gravamen or focus of the offense.” *Id.* at 630 (quoting *Jones v. State*, 323 S.W.3d 885, 889 (Tex. Crim. App. 2010)).

Because the assault statute establishes separate and distinct assaultive crimes, “[t]he gravamen of the offense of aggravated assault is the specific type of assault defined in Section 22.01.” See *Landrian*, 268 S.W.3d at 536–37. Aggravated assault with the underlying



crime of assault causing bodily injury is a “result of conduct” offense; aggravated assault with the underlying crime of assault by threat is a “nature of conduct” offense. *Id.* at 540. For “nature of conduct” offenses, “different types of conduct are considered to be separate offenses.” *Gonzales v. State*, 304 S.W.3d 838, 848 (Tex. Crim. App. 2010). The focus is on “the specific criminal act.” *See Young v. State*, 341 S.W.3d 417, 424 (Tex. Crim. App. 2011). By contrast, because assault by causing bodily injury is result-oriented, “[h]ow that serious bodily injury was caused does not ‘help define the allowable unit of prosecution for this type of aggravated assault offense, so’” a variance relating to how the actor caused the assault injury “cannot be material.” *See Hernandez*, 556 S.W.3d at 314 (citing *Johnson*, 364 S.W.3d at 296–98); *cf. Johnson*, 364 S.W.3d at 298 (“‘Stabbing with a knife’ and ‘bludgeoning with a baseball bat’ are two possible ways of murdering Dangerous Dan, but they do not constitute separate offenses. These methods of committing murder do describe an element of the offense: the element of causation. But murder is a result-of-conduct crime. What caused the victim’s death is not the focus or gravamen of the offense; the focus or gravamen is that the victim was killed. Variances such as this can never be material because such a variance can never show an ‘entirely different offense’ than what was alleged.”).

In addition to materiality, reversal of a conviction for a variance depends on whether the variance prejudices the defendant’s “substantial rights.” *Santana v. State*, 59 S.W.3d 187, 195 (Tex. Crim. App. 2001) (quoting *Gollihar v. State*, 46 S.W.3d 243, 257 (Tex. Crim. App. 2001)). Prejudice to the defendant’s substantial rights turns on “whether the indictment, as written, informed the defendant of the charge against him sufficiently to allow him to prepare an adequate defense at trial, and whether prosecution under the deficiently drafted indictment would subject the defendant to the risk of being prosecuted later for the same crime.” *Id.* (quoting

*Gollihar*, 46 S.W.3d at 257). “[A] conviction that contains a material variance that fails to give the defendant sufficient notice or would not bar a second prosecution for the same [offense] requires reversal, even when the evidence is otherwise legally sufficient to support the conviction.” *Byrd v. State*, 336 S.W.3d 242, 248 (Tex. Crim. App. 2011).

***B. “Nature of conduct” of a verbal threat differs materially from “nature of conduct” of a non-verbal threat***

With these principles in mind, we turn to Brooks’s arguments under his first issue. He points out that the indictment charged him with threatening Grayson “by telling her that he was going to end her life, and [he] did use or exhibit a deadly weapon during the commission of the assault, to wit: a piece of wood.” He concedes that the State need not have proven the exact words of the verbal threat in the indictment, but he argues that it had to prove “a *verbal* threat” of some kind, instead of only non-verbal threats. He says that “assault (and thus aggravated assault) by threat is a ‘conduct-oriented offense’, . . . meaning that [he] could be charged with as many instances of aggravated assault by threat as there were types of threats made.”

We agree. Assault by threat, because it is a “nature of conduct” offense, centers on the specific criminal act alleged. *See Young*, 341 S.W.3d at 424; *Garfias v. State*, 424 S.W.3d 54, 60–61 (Tex. Crim. App. 2014); *Gillette v. State*, 444 S.W.3d 713, 730 (Tex. App—Corpus Christi–Edinburg 2014, no pet.); *see also Stevenson v. State*, 499 S.W.3d 842, 850 (Tex. Crim. App. 2016) (“A nature-of-conduct crime’s focus is the conduct and the different types of conduct are considered separate offenses.”). Therefore if Brooks threatened Grayson by displaying the piece of wood and saying nothing, that “of and within itself constitutes a threat of the required imminent harm.” *See Robinson*, 596 S.W.2d at 133 n.7; *Mitchell*, 546 S.W.3d at 787. Such a non-verbal threat—an act different from a verbal threat to end Grayson’s life—would constitute



a “distinguishable discrete act” that would separately violate the assault statute. *See Harris*, 359 S.W.3d at 629 (quoting *Ex parte Cavazos*, 203 S.W.3d at 336). In other words, a verbal threat would be “a different offense” from a non-verbal one—each act is a separate and distinct act of threatening. *See Hernandez*, 556 S.W.3d at 316. Although the verbal or non-verbal character of a threat “is not an element of the offense” proscribed by the assault statute, it is “a non-statutory description of the statutory, gravamen element of” the threatening conduct. *See Johnson*, 364 S.W.3d at 297–98 (citing *Byrd*, 336 S.W.3d at 251–52).

The hypothetically correct jury charge for Brooks’s case, because of the indictment’s allegation of threatening Grayson “by telling her that he was going to end her life,” requires proof of a verbal threat. *See Hernandez*, 556 S.W.3d at 312–13; *Johnson*, 364 S.W.3d at 294. The only evidence suggestive of a verbal threat in this case was Grayson’s written statement for the police.<sup>3</sup> In it, she wrote that, during the assault, Brooks “told me I need to [h]it.” She never described any other statement that Brooks allegedly made, and the State offered no evidence of any other alleged verbal threat. We conclude that no rational juror could discern a threat in the statement here, “he told me I need to [h]it.”

The variance between the verbal threat alleged in the indictment and the proof at trial of a non-verbal threat of displaying a piece of wood constitutes a non-statutory, material variance. *See Hernandez*, 556 S.W.3d at 313–14; *Johnson*, 364 S.W.3d at 294–96. Thus, there was insufficient evidence to support the required finding of the verbal threat alleged. *See Hernandez*, 556 S.W.3d at 315; *see also Byrd*, 336 S.W.3d at 247 (“A variance of this type is

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<sup>3</sup> Grayson testified about another instance when Brooks threatened her—she even used the word “threatened” in her testimony—but her testimony made clear that she was referring to an occasion before the one charged in the indictment.

actually a failure of proof because the indictment sets out one distinct offense, but the proof shows an entirely different offense.”).

The State counters that the variance here is immaterial, like the ones in *Johnson* and *Marinos v. State*, 186 S.W.3d 167 (Tex. App.—Austin 2006, pet. ref’d). But in *Johnson*, the offense at issue was assault by causing bodily injury, not assault by threat. See 364 S.W.3d at 298. For assault by causing bodily injury, “[w]hat caused the victim’s injury is not the focus or gravamen of th[e] offense.” *Id.* Because that type of assault is a “result of conduct” offense, its gravamen is “the victim and the bodily injury that was inflicted.” *Id.* Here, we have a different offense—the “nature of conduct” offense of assault by threat. See *Landrian*, 268 S.W.3d at 536; *id.* at 543 (Price, J., concurring). And in *Marinos*, this Court recognized that the indictment contained no allegation of a verbal threat: “Neither the indictment nor the charge required a finding that appellant verbally threatened the complainant, although there is ample evidence that he did so.” 186 S.W.3d at 176 n.4. The opposite is true here. First, Brooks’s indictment *did* contain an allegation of a verbal threat and thus required proof of a verbal threat. Second, no evidence demonstrated a verbal threat.

Having concluded that a material variance exists, we next must determine whether the variance between the indictment’s allegation of a verbal threat and the evidence of a non-verbal one prejudiced Brooks’s substantial rights. It did so if it did not give him sufficient notice of the charge against him and would subject him to further prosecution for this assault against Grayson. See *Byrd*, 336 S.W.3d at 248; *Santana*, 59 S.W.3d at 195.

As for notice, we conclude that the indictment failed to give Brooks sufficient notice of any charge against him of a non-verbal threat. In response to the indictment, Brooks presented a defense centered around the absence of a verbal threat. In opening statement, he



characterized the interaction between Brooks and Grayson as him kicking her out of the house and her getting angry in response, casting doubt about whether Brooks made any threat. His cross-examination of the State's witnesses, including Grayson, emphasized the lack of a verbal threat. During the charge conference, counsel argued that the jury charge needed to include instructions about the indicted verbal threat. He further argued that the charge should direct the jury to acquit because "[t]here have been zero statements with regard to a threat" in evidence. Counsel also moved for a directed verdict on the same basis. Finally, he argued to the jury that "words mean things" and that proof of causing bodily injury to Grayson did not constitute proof of a threat because the words "cause injury" and "threaten" are different.

Furthermore, the kind of threat alleged—a verbal threat—differed from a non-verbal threat. The record reflects that Brooks defended against the lack of any verbal threat. We conclude that the notice factor points to prejudice to Brooks's substantial rights. *See Byrd*, 336 S.W.3d at 248; *Santana*, 59 S.W.3d at 195.

Under the second factor, the indictment for a verbal threat leaves open the possibility of a future indictment for a non-verbal one. The two, as we have concluded, constitute different assault-by-threat offenses. *See Hernandez*, 556 S.W.3d at 314. Thus, this factor points to prejudice to Brooks's substantial rights even if "the evidence [wa]s otherwise legally sufficient to support the conviction" for an assault by a non-verbal threat. *See Byrd*, 336 S.W.3d at 248.

For all these reasons, we hold that the variance between the indictment allegation of Brooks's threat "by telling [Grayson] that he was going to end her life" and the evidence at trial of a non-verbal threat of displaying a piece of wood was a material variance that prejudiced Brooks's substantial rights and resulted in insufficient evidence to support his conviction.

*See Hernandez*, 556 S.W.3d at 315–16. We thus sustain Brooks’s first issue and reverse his conviction for aggravated assault.

## **II. No Potential Lesser Included Offense Necessarily Found by the Jury**

Because we hold the evidence insufficient to support Brooks’s conviction for aggravated assault by threat as it was charged here, we must “decid[e] whether to reform the judgment to reflect a conviction for a lesser-included offense” before we may render a judgment of acquittal. *Thornton v. State*, 425 S.W.3d 289, 299–300 (Tex. Crim. App. 2014).

Our “authority to reform a judgment of conviction is limited to lesser-included offenses of the offense of conviction.” *Lang v. State*, 586 S.W.3d 125, 130 (Tex. App.—Austin 2019, pet. granted). A “necessar[y] part of the analysis” is “whether the offense for which a reformed judgment of conviction is sought is a lesser-included offense of the convicted offense.” *Id.* at 130 n.2. This is so because neither this Court nor the trial court has “jurisdiction to convict a defendant of an offense not charged in the charging instrument unless that offense is a lesser-included offense *of the crime charged*.” *See id.* (emphasis added). To identify potential lesser included offenses, “[w]e do not consider the evidence that was presented at trial; rather, we consider only the statutory elements of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon as they were modified by the particular allegations in the indictment.” *Rice v. State*, 333 S.W.3d 140, 145 (Tex. Crim. App. 2011).

Brooks identifies three potential lesser included offenses: attempted aggravated assault by threat with a deadly weapon, misdemeanor deadly conduct, and simple assault by threat. We have found no other potential lesser included offenses applicable to “the statutory



elements of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon as they were modified by the particular allegations in the indictment” here. *See id.*

In analyzing judgment reformation, we

must answer two questions: 1) in the course of convicting the appellant of the greater offense, must the jury have necessarily found every element necessary to convict the appellant for the lesser-included offense; and 2) conducting an evidentiary sufficiency analysis as though the appellant had been convicted of the lesser-included offense at trial, is there sufficient evidence to support a conviction for that offense?

*Thornton*, 425 S.W.3d at 300. If we answer either of these “no,” we are “not authorized to reform the judgment” to reflect a conviction for the lesser included offense. *Id.* “But if the answers to both are yes, [we are] authorized—indeed required—to avoid the ‘unjust’ result of an outright acquittal.” *Id.*

To reform to the lesser included offense of attempted aggravated assault by threat, the evidence must show that Brooks, “with specific intent to commit” aggravated assault by threat with a deadly weapon, “d[id] an act amounting to more than mere preparation that tend[ed] but fail[ed] to effect the commission of” that offense. *See* Tex. Penal Code § 15.01(a). “[T]o be guilty of criminal attempt, it is not necessary that the accused commit every act short of actual commission of the intended offense.” *Come v. State*, 82 S.W.3d 486, 489 (Tex. App.—Austin 2002, no pet.). “There is necessarily a gray area between conduct that is clearly no more than mere preparation and conduct that constitutes the last proximate act prior to actual commission of the offense.” *Id.* “Whether conduct falling in that gray area amounts to more than mere preparation must be determined on a case-by-case basis.” *Id.* No evidence shows conduct by Brooks that tended but failed to effect a verbal threat against Grayson beyond merely preparing to make a verbal threat. The only evidence of a verbal statement by Brooks was Grayson’s

written statement that Brooks “told [her] I need to [h]it.” We cannot discern from this statement any step beyond mere preparation toward verbally threatening her. No other testimony or exhibit suggests a step toward a verbal threat on the occasion in question. We thus conclude that the evidence is insufficient to support reformation to the lesser included offense of attempted aggravated assault by threat with a deadly weapon.

As for misdemeanor deadly conduct, that offense requires evidence that Brooks recklessly engaged in conduct that placed Grayson in imminent danger of serious bodily injury. *See* Tex. Penal Code § 22.05(a); *Dixon v. State*, 358 S.W.3d 250, 256–57 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] 2011, pet. ref’d). When an indictment alleges that the defendant intentionally or knowingly threatened to cause imminent bodily injury while using or exhibiting a deadly weapon, deadly conduct is established by proof of the same or less than all the facts needed to establish aggravated assault. *See Guzman v. State*, 188 S.W.3d 185, 190 n.9 (Tex. Crim. App. 2006); *Dixon*, 358 S.W.3d at 256–57.

We are bound by the indictment’s allegations when determining whether misdemeanor deadly conduct is a potential lesser included offense. *See Rice*, 333 S.W.3d at 145 (“We do not consider the evidence that was presented at trial; rather, we consider only the statutory elements of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon as they were modified by the particular allegations in the indictment.”); *Lang*, 586 S.W.3d at 130 n.2 (concluding that this Court has no “jurisdiction to convict a defendant of an offense not charged in the charging instrument unless that offense is a lesser-included offense *of the crime charged*” (emphasis added)). The indictment here alleged a verbal threat.

Accordingly, we must answer (1) whether, in convicting Brooks for aggravated assault by threat and with a deadly weapon, the jury must have necessarily found every element



necessary to convict him of misdemeanor deadly conduct and (2) whether sufficient evidence supports the necessary findings. *See Thornton*, 425 S.W.3d at 300. We answer “no” to the second question because only a verbal threat was charged. And as we concluded above, no rational juror could have found a verbal threat from the evidence. Thus, because there is insufficient evidence of the kind of threat charged, no evidence establishes the required combination of a threat plus the use or exhibition of a deadly weapon that would establish misdemeanor deadly conduct’s elements. *See Guzman*, 188 S.W.3d at 190 n.9 (“proof of threatening another with imminent bodily injury by the use of a deadly weapon constitutes proof of engaging in conduct that places another in imminent danger of serious bodily injury,” for misdemeanor deadly conduct); *Dixon*, 358 S.W.3d at 256–57 (same). Misdemeanor deadly conduct is not a potential lesser included offense of the aggravated assault by threat charged here. *See Thornton*, 425 S.W.3d at 300 (“If the answer to either of these questions is no, the court of appeals is not authorized to reform the judgment.”).

As for simple assault by threat, we have already concluded that the evidence of a non-verbal threat is insufficient to support a conviction for a charge based on a verbal threat. Thus, we cannot reform the judgment to simple assault by threat.

We do not have the authority to reform the judgment of conviction here to any lesser included offense. We therefore must reverse the judgment of conviction and render a judgment of acquittal. *See id.* at 299–300; *Lang*, 586 S.W.3d at 136. Because of this disposition, we need not reach Brooks’s remaining issues. *See Tex. R. App. P.* 47.1.

## **CONCLUSION**

We reverse the judgment of conviction and render a judgment of acquittal.

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Chari L. Kelly, Justice

Before Justices Goodwin, Baker, and Kelly

Reversed and Acquittal Rendered

Filed: July 3, 2020

Publish





CASE NO. CR25688 COUNT SINGLE  
INCIDENT NO./TRN: 9232856719-A001

THE STATE OF TEXAS

V.

JESSIE LEE BROOKS, JR.

STATE ID NO.: TX05097137

§ IN THE 20TH DISTRICT  
§  
§ COURT  
§  
§ MILAM COUNTY, TEXAS  
§  
§

## JUDGMENT OF CONVICTION BY JURY

Judge Presiding:	HON. JOHN W. YOUNGBLOOD	Date Judgment Entered:	10/26/2018
Attorney for State:	T. BRIAN PRICE	Attorney for Defendant:	HOAGIE KARELS-APPOINTED
<u>Offense for which Defendant Convicted:</u> <b>AGGRAVATED ASSAULT WITH DEADLY WEAPON</b>			
<u>Charging Instrument:</u> <b>INDICTMENT</b>		<u>Statute for Offense:</u> <b>22.02 Penal Code</b>	
<u>Date of Offense:</u> <b>8/15/2017</b>			
<u>Degree of Offense:</u> <b>1ST DEGREE FELONY</b>		<u>Plea to Offense:</u> <b>NOT GUILTY</b>	
<u>Verdict of Jury:</u> <b>GUILTY</b>		<u>Findings on Deadly Weapon:</u> <b>YES, NOT A FIREARM</b>	
Plea to 1 <sup>st</sup> Enhancement Paragraph:	<b>TRUE</b>	Plea to 2 <sup>nd</sup> Enhancement/Habitual Paragraph:	<b>TRUE</b>
Findings on 1 <sup>st</sup> Enhancement Paragraph:	<b>TRUE</b>	Findings on 2 <sup>nd</sup> Enhancement/Habitual Paragraph:	<b>TRUE</b>
<u>Punished Assessed by:</u> <b>COURT</b>	<u>Date Sentence Imposed:</u> <b>10/26/2108</b>	<u>Date Sentence to Commence:</u> <b>10/26/2018</b>	
Punishment and Place of Confinement:	<b>THIRTY (30) YEARS INSTITUTIONAL DIVISION, TDCJ</b>		

THIS SENTENCE SHALL RUN CONCURRENTLY.

☐ SENTENCE OF CONFINEMENT SUSPENDED, DEFENDANT PLACED ON COMMUNITY SUPERVISION FOR N/A .

<u>Fine:</u> \$ N/A	<u>Court Costs:</u> \$ 279.00	<u>Restitution:</u> \$ N/A	<u>Restitution Payable to:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> VICTIM (see below) <input type="checkbox"/> AGENCY/AGENT (see below)
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☒ Attachment A, Order to Withdraw Funds, is incorporated into this judgment and made a part hereof.

Sex Offender Registration Requirements do not apply to the Defendant. TEX. CODE CRIM. PROC. chapter 62.

The age of the victim at the time of the offense was N/A .

If Defendant is to serve sentence in TDCJ, enter incarceration periods in chronological order.

Time Credited:	From 9/13/2017 to 10/26/2018	From to	From to
	From to	From to	From to

If Defendant is to serve sentence in county jail or is given credit toward fine and costs, enter days credited below.

N/A DAYS NOTES: N/A

All pertinent information, names and assessments indicated above are incorporated into the language of the judgment below by reference.

This cause was called for trial in Milam County, Texas. The State appeared by her District Attorney.

Counsel / Waiver of Counsel (select one)

☒ Defendant appeared in person with Counsel.

☐ Defendant knowingly, intelligently, and voluntarily waived the right to representation by counsel in writing in open court.

It appeared to the Court that Defendant was mentally competent and had pleaded as shown above to the charging instrument. Both parties announced ready for trial. A jury was selected, impaneled, and sworn. The INDICTMENT was read to the jury, and Defendant entered a plea to the charged offense. The Court received the plea and entered it of record.

The jury heard the evidence submitted and argument of counsel. The Court charged the jury as to its duty to determine the guilt or innocence of Defendant, and the jury retired to consider the evidence. Upon returning to open court, the jury delivered its verdict in the presence of Defendant and defense counsel, if any.

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The Court received the verdict and ORDERED it entered upon the minutes of the Court.

**Punishment Assessed by Jury / Court / No election (select one)**

☐ **Jury.** Defendant entered a plea and filed a written election to have the jury assess punishment. The jury heard evidence relative to the question of punishment. The Court charged the jury and it retired to consider the question of punishment. After due deliberation, the jury was brought into Court, and, in open court, it returned its verdict as indicated above.

☒ **Court.** Defendant elected to have the Court assess punishment. After hearing evidence relative to the question of punishment, the Court assessed Defendant's punishment as indicated above.

☐ **No Election.** Defendant did not file a written election as to whether the judge or jury should assess punishment. After hearing evidence relative to the question of punishment, the Court assessed Defendant's punishment as indicated above.

The Court **FINDS** Defendant committed the above offense and **ORDERS, ADJUDGES AND DECREES** that Defendant is **GUILTY** of the above offense. The Court **FINDS** the Presentence Investigation, if so ordered, was done according to the applicable provisions of TEX. CODE CRIM. PROC. art. 42.12 § 9.

The Court **ORDERS** Defendant punished as indicated above. The Court **ORDERS** Defendant to pay all fines, court costs, and restitution as indicated above.

**Punishment Options (select one)**

☒ **Confinement in State Jail or Institutional Division.** The Court **ORDERS** the authorized agent of the State of Texas or the Sheriff of this County to take, safely convey, and deliver Defendant to the **Director, Institutional Division, TDCJ**. The Court **ORDERS** Defendant to be confined for the period and in the manner indicated above. The Court **ORDERS** Defendant remanded to the custody of the Sheriff of this county until the Sheriff can obey the directions of this sentence. The Court **ORDERS** that upon release from confinement, Defendant proceed immediately to the **MILAM COUNTY DISTRICT CLERK**. Once there, the Court **ORDERS** Defendant to pay, or make arrangements to pay, any remaining unpaid fines, court costs, and restitution as ordered by the Court above.

☐ **County Jail—Confinement / Confinement in Lieu of Payment.** The Court **ORDERS** Defendant immediately committed to the custody of the Sheriff of \_\_\_\_\_ County, Texas on the date the sentence is to commence. Defendant shall be confined in the County Jail for the period indicated above. The Court **ORDERS** that upon release from confinement, Defendant shall proceed immediately to the \_\_\_\_\_. Once there, the Court **ORDERS** Defendant to pay, or make arrangements to pay, any remaining unpaid fines, court costs, and restitution as ordered by the Court above.

☐ **Fine Only Payment.** The punishment assessed against Defendant is for a **FINE ONLY**. The Court **ORDERS** Defendant to proceed immediately to the Office of the \_\_\_\_\_ County. Once there, the Court **ORDERS** Defendant to pay or make arrangements to pay all fines and court costs as ordered by the Court in this cause.

**Execution / Suspension of Sentence (select one)**

☒ The Court **ORDERS** Defendant's sentence **EXECUTED**.

☐ The Court **ORDERS** Defendant's sentence of confinement **SUSPENDED**. The Court **ORDERS** Defendant placed on community supervision for the adjudged period (above) so long as Defendant abides by and does not violate the terms and conditions of community supervision. The order setting forth the terms and conditions of community supervision is incorporated into this judgment by reference.

The Court **ORDERS** that Defendant is given credit noted above on this sentence for the time spent incarcerated.

**Furthermore, the following special findings or orders apply:**

**Deadly Weapon.**

The Court **FINDS** Defendant used or exhibited a deadly weapon, namely, a piece of wood, during the commission of a felony offense or during immediate flight therefrom or was a party to the offense and knew that a deadly weapon would be used or exhibited. TEX. CODE CRIM. PROC. art. 42.12 §3g.

**Family Violence:**

The Court **FINDS** that Defendant was prosecuted for an offense under Title 5 of the Penal Code that involved family violence. TEX. CODE CRIM. PROC. art. 42.013.

The Court **FINDS** that the punishment range was enhanced to Habitual with a punishment range of life, or for any term of not more than 99 years but not less than 25 years in TDCJ.

Signed and entered on

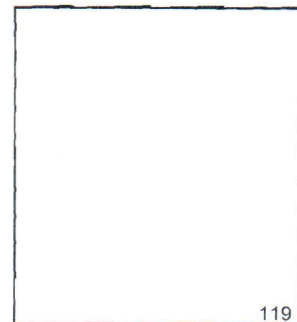
11/1/18

X  
JOHN W. YOUNGBLOOD  
JUDGE PRESIDING

FILED  
At 4:00 o'clock P M

NOV 01 2018

KAREN BERRY  
DISTRICT CLERK, MILAM COUNTY, TEXAS  
BY *[Signature]*  
DEPUTY



119

Clerk: CR25,688; JESSIE LEE BROOKS, JR. SID# 05097137

IMAGED

FINGERPRINT EXHIBIT, CCP 42.01, Sec 1(23)

CAUSE NO. CR25688

THE STATE OF TEXAS

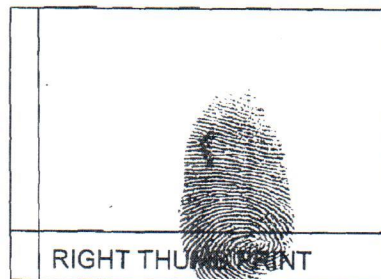
IN THE 20<sup>th</sup> DISTRICT COURT

VS.

OF

Jessie Lee Brooks

MILAM COUNTY, TEXAS



[Signature]  
Defendant

The fingerprint shown is a print of the above named defendant's right thumb taken by the undersigned in open court.

Karen Berry  
District Clerk  
Milam County, Texas

By [Signature]  
Deputy

Exhibit "A"  
Fingerprint Exhibit to Judgment



ORIGINAL

CR 25,688

STATE OF TEXAS

v.

JESSIE LEE BROOKS, JR.

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§

IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT COURT

OF

MILAM COUNTY, TEXAS

### JURY INSTRUCTIONS

Members of the jury,

The defendant, Jessie Lee Brooks, Jr., is accused of Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon. The defendant has pleaded "not guilty," and you have heard all of the evidence that will be produced on whether the defendant has been proved guilty.

Both sides will soon present final arguments. Before they do so, I must now give you the instructions you must follow in deciding whether the defendant has been proved guilty or not.

You will have a written copy of these instructions to take with you and to use during your deliberations.

First I will tell you about some general principles of law that must govern your decision of the case. Then I will tell you about the specific law applicable to this case. Finally, I will instruct you on the rules that must control your deliberations.

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

#### The Indictment

The indictment is not evidence of guilt. The indictment is only a document required to bring the case before you. The indictment cannot be considered in any way by the jury. Do not consider that fact that the defendant has been arrested, confined, or indicted. You may not draw any inference of guilt from any of these circumstances.

#### Presumption of Innocence

The defendant is presumed innocent of the charge. All persons are presumed to be innocent, and no person may be convicted of an offense unless each element of the offense is proved beyond a reasonable doubt. The law does not require a defendant to prove his innocence or produce any evidence at all. Unless the jurors are satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt of the defendant's guilt after careful and impartial consideration of all the evidence in the case, that presumption of innocence alone is sufficient to acquit the defendant.

#### Burden of Proof

IMAGED



The burden of proof throughout the trial is always on the state. The defendant does not have the burden to prove anything. The state must prove every element of the offense beyond a reasonable doubt to establish guilt for the offense. If the state proves every element of the offense beyond a reasonable doubt, then you must find the defendant guilty. If the state does not prove every element of the offense beyond a reasonable doubt, then you must find the defendant not guilty. If, after you have considered all the evidence and these instructions, you have a reasonable doubt about whether the defendant is guilty, you must find the defendant not guilty.

It is not required that the state prove guilt beyond all possible doubt; it is required that the state's proof excludes all 'reasonable doubt' concerning the defendant's guilt.

### **Jury as Fact Finder**

As the jurors, you review the evidence and determine the facts and what they prove. You judge the believability of the witnesses and what weight to give their testimony.

In judging the facts and believability of the witnesses, you must apply the law provided in these instructions.

### **Evidence**

The evidence consists of the testimony and exhibits admitted in the trial. You must consider only evidence to reach your decision. You must not consider, discuss, or mention anything that is not evidence in the trial. You must not consider or mention any personal knowledge or information you may have about any fact or person connected with this case that is not evidence in the trial.

Statements made by the lawyers are not evidence. The questions asked by the attorneys are not evidence. Evidence consists of the testimony of the witnesses and materials admitted into evidence.

Nothing the judge has said or done in this case should be considered by you as an opinion about the facts of this case or influence you to vote one way or the other.

You should give terms their common meanings, unless you have been told in these instructions that the terms are given special meanings. In that case, of course, you should give those terms the meanings provided in these instructions.

While you should consider only evidence, you are permitted to draw reasonable inferences from the testimony and exhibits that are justified in the light of common experience. In other words, you may make deductions and reach conclusions that reason and common sense lead you to draw from the facts that have been established by the evidence.

You are to render a fair and impartial verdict based on the evidence admitted in the case under the law that is in these instructions. Do not allow your verdict to be determined by bias or prejudice.

### **Admitted Exhibits**

You may, if you wish, examine exhibits. If you wish to examine an exhibit, the foreperson will inform the court and specifically identify the exhibit you wish to examine. Only exhibits that were admitted into evidence may be given to you for examination.

### **Right Not To Testify**

Our law provides that a defendant may testify on his own behalf if he elects to do so. This, however, is a privilege accorded to the defendant, and in the event he elects not to testify, that fact cannot be taken as a circumstance against him. In this case, the defendant has elected not to testify, and you are instructed that you cannot and must not refer or allude to that fact throughout your deliberations or take it into consideration for any purpose whatsoever as a circumstance against the defendant.

### **The Verdict**

The law requires that you render a verdict of either "guilty" or "not guilty." The verdict of "not guilty" simply means that the state's evidence does not prove the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

You may return a verdict only if all twelve of you agree on this verdict.

When you reach a verdict, the foreperson should notify the court.

## **RULES THAT CONTROL DELIBERATIONS**

You must follow these rules while you are deliberating and until you reach a verdict. After the closing arguments by the attorneys, you will go into the jury room.

Your first task will be to pick your foreperson. The foreperson should conduct the deliberations in an orderly way. Each juror has one vote, including the foreperson. The foreperson must supervise the voting, vote with other members on the verdict, and sign the verdict sheet.


While deliberating and until excused by the trial court, all jurors must follow these rules:

1. You must not discuss this case with any court officer, or the attorneys, or anyone not on the jury.
2. You must not discuss this case unless all of you are present in the jury room. If anyone leaves the room, then you must stop your discussions about the case until all of you are present again.
3. You must communicate with the judge only in writing, signed by the foreperson and given to the judge through the officer assigned to you.
4. You must not conduct any independent investigations, research, or experiments.
5. You must tell the judge if anyone attempts to contact you about the case before you reach your verdict.

Your sole duty at this point is to determine whether the defendant has been proved guilty. You must restrict your deliberations to this matter.

After you have arrived at your verdict, you are to use one of the forms attached to these instructions. You should have your foreperson sign his or her name to the particular form that conforms to your verdict.

After the closing arguments by the attorneys, you will begin your deliberations to decide your verdict.

  
8/8/18

**FILED**  
At 1:55 o'clock PM

AUG 08 2018

KAREN BERRY  
DISTRICT CLERK, MILAM COUNTY, TEXAS

BY Karen Berry  
DEPUTY



CR 25,688

STATE OF TEXAS

v.

JESSIE LEE BROOKS, JR.

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§  
§  
§

IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT COURT

OF

MILAM COUNTY, TEXAS

### AGGRAVATED ASSAULT WITH A DEADLY WEAPON

#### Accusation

The state accuses the defendant of having committed the offense of aggravated assault. Specifically, the accusation is that the defendant intentionally or knowingly threatened imminent bodily injury to Lisa Grayson and that the defendant did use or exhibit a deadly weapon during the commission of the assault, to wit: a piece of wood.

#### Relevant Statutes

A person commits an offense if the person intentionally or knowingly threatens imminent bodily injury to another and uses or exhibits a deadly weapon during the commission of the assault.

To prove that the defendant is guilty of aggravated assault, the state must prove three elements. The elements are that –

1. the defendant threatened imminent bodily injury to another; and
2. the defendant did this intentionally or knowingly; and
3. the defendant used or exhibited a deadly weapon during the alleged assault.

#### Definitions

##### *Bodily Injury*

“Bodily injury” means physical pain, illness, or any impairment of physical condition.

##### *Intentionally Threaten Another with Imminent Bodily Injury*

A person intentionally threatens another with imminent bodily injury if it is the person’s conscious objective or desire to cause the other person to fear imminent bodily injury.

##### *Knowingly Threaten Another with Imminent Bodily Injury*

A person knowingly threatens another with imminent bodily injury if the person is aware that the person’s conduct is reasonably certain to cause the other person to fear imminent bodily injury.

##### *Deadly Weapon*

"Deadly weapon" means anything that in the manner of its use or intended use is capable of causing death or serious bodily injury.

*Serious Bodily Injury*

"Serious bodily injury" means bodily injury that creates a substantial risk of death or that causes death, serious permanent disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of that function of any bodily member.

**Application of Law to Facts**

To find the defendant guilty of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, you must determine whether the state has proved, beyond a reasonable doubt, three elements. The elements are that –

1. the defendant, in Milam County, Texas, on or about August 15, 2017, threatened imminent bodily injury to Lisa Grayson;
2. the defendant did this –
  - a. intentionally; or
  - b. knowingly; and
3. the defendant, during the alleged assault, used or exhibited a deadly weapon, to wit: a piece of wood.

You must all agree on elements 1, 2, and 3 listed above, but you do not have to agree on the culpable mental states listed in elements 2.a. and 2.b. above.

If you all agree the state has failed to prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, any of the elements listed above, you must find the defendant "not guilty."

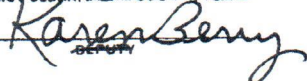
If you all agree that the state has proved, beyond a reasonable doubt, each of the three elements listed above, you must find the defendant "guilty."

  
8/8/18

**FILED**  
At 1:55 o'clock P M

**AUG 08 2018**

KAREN BERRY  
DISTRICT CLERK, MILAM COUNTY, TEXAS

BY   
CLERK

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CR 25,688

STATE OF TEXAS

v.

JESSIE LEE BROOKS, JR.

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§

IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT COURT

OF

MILAM COUNTY, TEXAS

**VERDICT – NOT GUILTY**

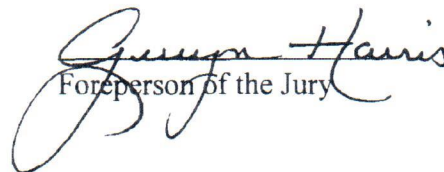
We, the jury, find the defendant, Jessie Lee Brooks, Jr., not guilty.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Foreperson of the Jury

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Foreperson

**VERDICT – GUILTY OF AGGRAVATED ASSAULT WITH A DEADLY WEAPON**

We, the jury, find the defendant, Jessie Lee Brooks, Jr., guilty of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, as charged in the indictment.

  
Foreperson of the Jury

Gwyn Harris  
Printed Name of Foreperson

**FILED**  
At 4:00 o'clock P.M

AUG 08 2018

KAREN BERRY  
DISTRICT CLERK, MILAM COUNTY, TEXAS

BY Karen Berry  
DEPUTY

IMAGED

## Tex. Penal Code § 22.02, Part 1 of 2

This document is current through the most recent legislation which is the 2019 Regular Session, 86th Legislature, and the 2019 election results.

*Texas Statutes & Codes Annotated by LexisNexis® > Penal Code > Title 5 Offenses Against the Person (Chs. 19 — 22) > Chapter 22 Assaultive Offenses (§§ 22.01 — 22.12)*

### **Sec. 22.02. Aggravated Assault.**

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(a) A person commits an offense if the person commits assault as defined in Section 22.01 and the person:

- (1) causes serious bodily injury to another, including the person's spouse; or
- (2) uses or exhibits a deadly weapon during the commission of the assault.

(b) An offense under this section is a felony of the second degree, except that the offense is a felony of the first degree if:

(1) the actor uses a deadly weapon during the commission of the assault and causes serious bodily injury to a person whose relationship to or association with the defendant is described by Section 71.0021(b), 71.003, or 71.005, Family Code;

(2) regardless of whether the offense is committed under Subsection (a)(1) or (a)(2), the offense is committed:

(A) by a public servant acting under color of the servant's office or employment;

(B) against a person the actor knows is a public servant while the public servant is lawfully discharging an official duty, or in retaliation or on account of an exercise of official power or performance of an official duty as a public servant;

(C) in retaliation against or on account of the service of another as a witness, prospective witness, informant, or person who has reported the occurrence of a crime; or

(D) against a person the actor knows is a security officer while the officer is performing a duty as a security officer; or

(3) the actor is in a motor vehicle, as defined by Section 501.002, Transportation Code, and:

(A) knowingly discharges a firearm at or in the direction of a habitation, building, or vehicle;

(B) is reckless as to whether the habitation, building, or vehicle is occupied; and

(C) in discharging the firearm, causes serious bodily injury to any person.

(c) The actor is presumed to have known the person assaulted was a public servant or a security officer if the person was wearing a distinctive uniform or badge indicating the person's employment as a public servant or status as a security officer.

(d) In this section, "security officer" means a commissioned security officer as defined by Section 1702.002, Occupations Code, or a noncommissioned security officer registered under Section 1702.221, Occupations Code.

### **History**

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## Tex. Penal Code § 22.02, Part 1 of 2

Enacted by Acts 1973, 63rd Leg., ch. 399 (S.B. 34), § 1, effective January 1, 1974; am. Acts 1979, 66th Leg., ch. 164 (S.B. 529), § 3, effective September 1, 1979; am. Acts 1979, 66th Leg., ch. 655 (S.B. 846), § 2, effective September 1, 1979; am. Acts 1983, 68th Leg., ch. 79 (S.B. 173), § 1, effective September 1, 1983; am. Acts 1983, 68th Leg., ch. 977 (H.B. 2008), § 2, effective September 1, 1983; am. Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 223 (S.B. 447), § 1, effective September 1, 1985; am. Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 18 (S.B. 251), § 3, effective April 14, 1987; am. Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 1101 (S.B. 341), § 12, effective September 1, 1987; am. Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 939 (H.B. 9), §§ 1—3, effective September 1, 1989; am. Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 334 (H.B. 1188), § 2, effective September 1, 1991; am. Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 903 (H.B. 806), § 1, effective September 1, 1991; am. Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 900 (S.B. 1067), § 1.01, effective September 1, 1994; am. Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1019 (H.B. 565), § 3, effective September 1, 2003; am. Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 788 (S.B. 91), § 3, effective September 1, 2005; am. Acts 2009, 81st Leg., ch. 594 (H.B. 176), § 2, effective September 1, 2009.



### **Automated Certificate of eService**

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Donelle Keen on behalf of Kyle Nuttall  
Bar No. 24082518  
daooffice@milamcounty.net  
Envelope ID: 48839706  
Status as of 12/11/2020 10:03 AM CST

Associated Case Party: JessieLeeBrooks, Jr.

<b>Name</b>	<b>BarNumber</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>TimestampSubmitted</b>	<b>Status</b>
Justin BradfordSmith		justin@templelawoffice.com	12/10/2020 2:56:52 PM	SENT
Hoagie Karels		marlinlawyer@sbcglobal.net	12/10/2020 2:56:52 PM	SENT
Sharon Diaz		sharon@diazwright.com	12/10/2020 2:56:52 PM	SENT

#### **Case Contacts**

<b>Name</b>	<b>BarNumber</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>TimestampSubmitted</b>	<b>Status</b>
Paralegal Diaz & WRight		paralegal@diazwright.com	12/10/2020 2:56:52 PM	SENT
Stacey M.Soule		information@spa.texas.gov	12/10/2020 2:56:52 PM	SENT